

THE LADY IN THE CASTLE AND THE LADY NOT IN THE CASTLE
(1985)

she lived in this huge house
it looked like a
castle
and when you got inside
and looked up
the ceilings were so very
high
and I was poor
and it all rather
fascinated
me.

she
was no longer
young
but she had this
mass
of hair
that damn near
went down to her
ankles
and
I thought about
how strange
it would be
doing it
with all that
hair.

I drove up there
several times
in my old
car
and she had fine
liquors to
drink
and we sat and
drank
but I could
never get quite
near her
and though I didn't
push at
it
something about
not
connecting
did offend my
ego
for ugly as I was

I had always been
lucky with the
ladies.

it confused me
and I suppose
I needed
that.

she liked to
talk about
the arts and
about
film making
and listening
to all that
only made me
drink
more.

I
finally
just rather
gave her
up
and a good year
or so
went by
when
one night
the phone
rang: it was the
lady.

"I want to come see
you," she said.

"I'm writing now, I'm
going hot ... I can't see
anybody"

"I just want to come
by, I won't bother you,
I'll just sit on the
couch, I'll sleep on the
couch, I
won't bother you"

"NO! JESUS CHRIST,
I'M WRITING,
I CAN'T SEE ANYBODY!"

I hung up.

the lady who was actually
on the couch
said, "oh, you've gotten all
SOFT now!"

"yeah...."

"come here...."

she took my penis
in her hand
flicked out her
tongue
then
stopped.

"what are you writing?"

"nothing ...
I've got a writer's
block...."

"sure you have...
your pipes are clogged...
you need to get
cleaned out...."

then she had me in her
mouth

and then the phone rang
again...

in a fury
I ran over to the
phone
picked it
up...

it was the lady in the
castle:

"listen, I won't bother you,
you won't even know I'm
there...."

"YOU WHORE, I'M GETTING A
BLOW JOB!"

I hung up and
turned back...

the other lady was walking
toward the
door...

"what's a matter?" I
asked.

"I can't STAND that
term!"

"what term?"

"BLOW JOB!" she
screamed.

she slammed the door and
was gone....

I walked to where the
typewriter sat
put a new piece of paper
in there.
it was one
a.m.

I sat there and
drank scotch with
beer chasers
smoked cheap
cigars.

3:15 a.m.
I was still sitting
there
re-lighting old
cigar stubs and
drinking ale.

the new
piece of paper was still
unused.

I switched out the
lights
worked my way toward
the bedroom
got myself on the
bed
clothes still
on

I could hear the toilet

half-running
but couldn't get up
to tap the handle
and end that
sound

my god damned pipes were
clogged.

COFFEE (1985)

I was having a coffee at the
counter
when a man
3 or 4 stools down
asked me,
"listen, weren't you the
guy who was
hanging from his
heels
from that 4th floor
hotel room
the other
night?"

"yes," I answered, "that
was me."

"what made you do
that?" he asked.

"well, it's pretty
involved."

he looked forward
then.

the waitress
who had been
standing there
asked me,
"he was joking,
wasn't
he?"

"no," I
said.

I paid, got up, walked
to the door, opened
it.

I heard the man
say, "that guy's
nuts."

out on the street I
walked north
feeling
curiously
honored.

THE WAY IT WORKS? (1988)

sometimes I think the gods
deliberately keep pushing
me into fires
just to hear me
yelp out
a few good
lines.

they just aren't going to
let me retire
silk scarf about neck
giving lectures at
Yale.

the gods need me to
entertain them.

they must be terribly
bored with
the others

but I am too.

and now my cigarette lighter
has gone out.
I sit here
flicking it:
click, click, click....

this kind of fire
they won't
give me.

— Charles Bukowski
San Pedro CA